



Tennessee News Release

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In Cooperation with Tennessee Department of Agriculture

LARGEST WHEAT CROP SINCE 1982

NASHVILLE, May 9, 2008 – Tennessee’s 2008 winter wheat production is forecast at 28.4 million bushels which, if realized, would be almost three times more than the amount produced in 2007, according to a recent survey conducted by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service, Tennessee Field Office. Yield is expected to average 58.0 bushels per acre, up 41 percent from a year earlier. Besides yield, another factor that boosted production was producers’ reaction to record high prices last fall, as they planted 200,000 more acres than the previous year.

Tennessee farmers seeded 620,000 acres last fall, up 47 percent from the previous year, and the largest single year acreage increase since the 1981 crop. Wheat producers expect to harvest 490,000 acres for grain, 230,000 more than a year ago. The remaining 130,000 acres were used as a cover crop, will be harvested for hay or silage, or were abandoned due to flooding. By the week ending May 4, half of the State’s acreage had headed, well behind the normal pace. Currently, 80 percent of the crop is rated in good to excellent condition.

United States: Production is forecast at 1.78 billion bushels, up 17 percent from 2007. Based on May 1 conditions, the U.S. yield is forecast at 44.3 bushels per acre, 2.1 bushels above last year. Expected grain area totals 40.2 million acres, up 12 percent from last year. Hard Red Winter (HRW) harvested acreage is up about 6 percent from the previous year. Soft Red Winter (SRW) harvested acreage is estimated to be up 35 percent from last year. The portion of the winter wheat crop rated good to excellent on April 27, at 46 percent, was 10 percentage points below a year ago.

Growers in many States in the SRW area expect yields to be above last year, especially in the Southeast due mostly to improved moisture conditions. Harvested acreage across the SRW area is up from last year due to an increase in planted acres, and fewer acres being abandoned and cut for forage compared with last year when drought conditions and an April freeze reduced harvested area. In the Pacific Northwest, wheat condition is rated mostly fair to good with soil moisture in mostly adequate supply. A cold spring has significantly delayed crop development.

Winter Wheat: Tennessee, Surrounding States, and U.S., May 1, 2008 with Comparisons¹

State	Acreage Harvested		Yield Per Acre		Production	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
	1,000 Acres		Bushels		1,000 Bushels	
Arkansas	700	840	41.0	53.0	28,700	44,520
Georgia	230	350	40.0	54.0	9,200	18,900
Kentucky	250	450	49.0	66.0	12,250	29,700
Mississippi	330	425	56.0	57.0	18,480	24,225
Missouri	880	1,120	43.0	52.0	37,840	58,240
North Carolina	500	700	40.0	51.0	20,000	35,700
TENNESSEE	260	490	41.0	58.0	10,660	28,420
Virginia	205	250	64.0	64.0	13,120	16,000
United States	35,952	40,162	42.2	44.3	1,515,989	1,777,532

¹ 2008 forecast, 2007 final.

STATE HAY INVENTORY LOWEST IN ALMOST A HALF CENTURY

Tennessee: Hay stocks on Tennessee farms totaled 195,000 tons on May 1, down 54 percent from last year and the lowest since 1962. Hay supplies across the State were very short to short going into the winter months. This continued a prolonged period of hay deficit issues, combined with poor to very poor pasture conditions. Hay prices soared to record levels over the past year, as supplies had to be shipped in from other areas of the country. Even with the liquidation of many herds last summer and fall, numerous producers were still faced with a lack of available grazing and increased feed costs for their livestock. Disappearance of hay, which is hay fed, sold or wasted, from December 1, 2007 - May 1, 2008, totaled 1.74 million tons.

United States: All hay stored on farms May 1, 2008 totaled 21.6 million tons, up 44 percent from the previous year. Disappearance of hay from December 1, 2007- May 1, 2008 totaled 82.4 million tons, 1 percent more than the disappearance of 81.5 million tons for the same period a year earlier. Hay stocks increased from last year throughout the entire Great Plains, the Delta, most of the Southeast, and the Rocky Mountain States. Hay stocks increased significantly in Texas and Oklahoma where weather conditions during the 2007 growing season nearly doubled hay production and improved pasture conditions throughout the year. Lower 2007 hay production in most States east of the Mississippi River, except in the Southeast, held May 1, 2008 hay stocks below a year ago. The largest declines occurred in Kentucky, Minnesota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. In Kentucky and Tennessee where stocks are less than half of the previous year, production was down due to the April 2007 freeze and dry summer weather, so some producers resorted to hauling hay in from other States. Wisconsin's May 1 hay stocks are at a record low level.